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Civic Organizations and Municipal Parties

A Symposium on Reform Organizations in

**Philadelphia, Baltimore, Buffalo, Cincinnati, Pittsburgh, New Orleans,
Minneapolis, Kansas City, Mo., Denver, Los Angeles, Seattle.**

PHILADELPHIA

CITY PARTY.

By **WILLIAM CLARK MASON, ESQ.**

On the 7th of last November the fusion forces in Philadelphia, led by the City Party, after a campaign such as had never before been seen in our city, polled 148,000 votes against 100,000 cast for the regular Republican organization, the candidates of the City Party being elected by a clear majority of 48,000 votes.

As soon as the "Organization" had recovered from the shock of defeat, the prophets found their voice, and it was very generally stated that this victory for the City Party was the result of a spasm on the part of the public, and that before very long the eminently respectable citizens would go to sleep, and the "Organization" would come to its own again. But for once the prophets misjudged the sentiment of the people. The organization of the City Party successfully withstood the temptations which come with victory, and maintained intact its membership in the various wards.

The municipal election which was held on the 20th of this past February was the anniversary of the first contest in which the City Party engaged, and was regarded by all to be the test of the strength of the City Party. At this time there was nothing unusual to arouse the interest of the voters; there were none of the dramatic elements present which attended the November campaign, and the managers of the Republican organization predicted a victory of at least forty thousand for their candidates. The offices to be filled were those of Magistrate, to be elected by the city at large; members

of Select Councils in sixteen wards; members of Common Councils in eleven wards; school directors and election officers in all of the forty-three wards of the city. In those wards where there was a councilmanic contest an energetic campaign was waged, and in some wards where the school directors presented the only issue the lines between the City Party and the Republican organization were clearly drawn—but in none of the wards was there the same personal interest of all the independent voters that was shown in the November campaign. The burden of carrying on the February fight fell upon the “workers” of the City Party in the several divisions. The campaign lasted about four weeks, and instead of red fire and sensational newspaper support which aided much in November there was the sober personal argument of the earnest adherents of the City Party, interested in obtaining the proper type of men as municipal servants. When the polls had closed and the votes were counted, in spite of the fact that the total vote cast was less by 50,000 than it was in November, the candidate for Magistrate on the City Party ticket received a majority of 11,000 over the candidate of the Republican organization. Out of sixteen Select Councilmen to be elected the City Party elected eight, and also elected eight Common Councilmen out of the thirteen voted for, in addition to 234 school directors out of a total of 516.

In February, 1905, the City Party failed to carry a single ward; in November, 1905, the candidates of the City Party carried twenty-eight wards, while in the recent election the City Party carried eighteen wards for school directors and twenty-two wards for Magistrate. The most important feature of the victory, however, is that the City Party elected the majority or minority election officer in nearly every one of the eleven hundred election divisions in the city, thus ensuring an honest conduct of elections for the period of at least one year. The control of the elections boards has been the source of greatest power for corruption and fraud on the part of the Republican organization in the past, and with this element of strength eliminated from the “Organization,” it only remains for the independent citizens to cast their votes at the ensuing elections to assure the election of the candidates of the people.

The success of the City Party in February means that the victory in November was not a mere outburst of enthusiasm due to the emotions of a day and the glare of red lights. It means that the people of Philadelphia have seriously and soberly expressed their will that the government of our city shall be retained in the hands of the citizens, and that the public servants shall represent their constituents and not a group of public service corporations or municipal contractors.

The effect of this second victory of the City Party will be shown when the City Councils organize in April, and from present indications it would seem likely that, although the Councilmen elected by the City Party are in the minority in both branches of Councils, the president of both branches will be elected from the supporters of the City Party. The fact that this is possible shows that members of the old organization appreciate that the

people are aroused and will insist that their will be obeyed. It means that once more the people shall have a government which shall be representative of the majority instead of the minority, and that the day is not far distant when every citizen shall be an active participant in the government of the municipality of which he is a member. The result will be a higher type of public officials, more intelligent legislation, and more efficient administration of all departments of the government, to the betterment of the moral and physical welfare of the entire community.

BALTIMORE

a REFORM LEAGUE.

b MUNICIPAL LEAGUE.

By SOLOMON BLUM, Johns Hopkins University.

Baltimore's political position, while not unique among our large cities, is certainly unusual in that the question of corruption in our civic life has not been predominant for the last decade or more, nor has any new problem such as municipal ownership assumed sufficient proportions to cause the formation of a municipal party antagonistic to the two old parties. The interest has shifted to a great degree from the political to the economic field. As a consequence, civic organizations and third parties do not play the conspicuous part in Baltimore's political life that they do in New York, Philadelphia and Chicago.

In every municipal campaign within recent years citizens' organizations have been formed either by the party machines or by Independent Democrats, Independent Republicans or by "Simon Pure" Independents for the purpose of aiding some candidate or measure. Frequently their campaigns are carried on with great vigor through the press, by public meeting and by direct canvass of the voters.

After the elections these organizations disband. At times they have exerted considerable influence. In the recent election the Democratic Anti-Amendment Association opposed the proposed constitutional amendment which was being fathered by the Democratic organization, and was one of the potent factors in its overwhelming defeat. In the elections which resulted in the passage of the bills authorizing the issue of municipal bonds an organization of Independents was influential.

The Baltimore Reform League, which I described in some detail in the March, 1905, *ANNALS*, is supposed to be entirely non-partisan. It is a small compact organization composed of many of the most valued citizens of Baltimore, and maintains its influence because the great body of the citizens believe in the sincerity of its purposes and have confidence in the men who are at its head. The chief work of the league at present is to investigate the

qualifications of judges of elections and to bring before the Supervisors of elections the results of its labors.

It is probable that if any crisis in our political situation should arise this body would become, as it has been in the past, the nucleus for the independent movement in the city. At present any positive policy which it may have has been subordinated to its efforts to promote pure elections.

The Municipal League of Baltimore was organized in February, 1905. Its purpose is somewhat similar to that of the reform leagues. Its methods are different, however. A call was issued to one hundred citizens supposed to represent the various elements of our population irrespective of political affiliation. The attempt was then made to enlist the support of as many voters as possible by the circulation of petitions. As no obligation was incurred by signing this petition, the number of signers was not in any sense an adequate index of the league's strength. The league then started an investigation of the councilmanic candidates of both parties; and in an elaborate report given to the press the qualifications of the candidates were set forth. In the primaries which followed the league was not as influential as its organizers had hoped it to be. And in the election the results were not more promising for its future influence. It is too early, perhaps, to state with certainty either the future policy or influence of the league.

There are two reasons which make the formation of a municipal party particularly difficult. In recent years, owing either to the improved election laws or to an actual increase in numbers, the Republican party has been able to make a vigorous contest both for the Mayoralty and for members of the Council. In two instances it elected its Mayoralty candidate, and in the last campaign the result had to be decided by the courts. This has put both parties upon their mettle, and has prevented the evils of one-party domination which have afflicted other cities. This, too, has made the independent voter a factor to be counted on and catered to by both parties. The most distinctive feature in our municipal life is the importance of the negro vote. Of all our large cities Baltimore has, next to Washington, the largest negro population in the country, and by far the largest effective negro voting population. Of the registered voters October, 1904, there were, of a total of 119,271, 17,880 negroes, or about 15 per cent. of the registered vote. This vote is almost solidly Republican and the most immobile of any class of the population. No third party could hope to change the allegiance of the negro vote. As a consequence, any such party would be looked upon by the Democrats, who might otherwise have been attracted to it, as an adjunct to the Republicans, and, in fact, it would be so. It seems, therefore, that unless both of the present parties become hopelessly corrupt or incompetent or the demand for some special reform as municipal ownership becomes crystallized into a great civic desire which both parties refuse to satisfy, the prospect for the success of a municipal party is decidedly remote.

BUFFALO**a REFERENDUM LEAGUE.****b MUNICIPAL LEAGUE.**

By **ROBERT S. BINKERD**, Secretary Municipal League of Buffalo.

The Municipal and Referendum Leagues took an active part in the municipal election of last November. The Referendum League ran three unsuccessful independent candidates for Alderman, and secured the submission on the voting machines of the question, "Shall the City of Buffalo own a municipal electric lighting and power plant?" About 12 per cent. of the citizens voted on the proposition, four-fifths of the vote cast being in the affirmative.

The Municipal League followed the well-known Chicago plan and ran no independent candidates, but investigated and published the records of party candidates. Of twelve candidates for Alderman recommended six were elected. Notable victories were secured in the defeat of two boodle candidates for nomination in the Sixth and Twenty-fifth Wards, while in the final election an indicted boodle Alderman in the Fifth Ward was defeated. The greatest victory, however, was the defeat of "Honest John" Martin, of the Twentieth Ward, one of the worst figures in the Common Council. His former plurality of 656 was changed to defeat by 45 votes.

Out of thirteen candidates for supervisor recommended six were elected, and at the primaries the former leader of the Republican gang was defeated for renomination. The independent conduct of the new supervisors has had a tonic effect on that board.

The league set out to elect one assessor and to defeat another, and succeeded. The recommended candidate received the highest vote cast, 39,000, and the condemned candidate the lowest vote cast, 23,000.

For Councilman the league recommended only two candidates, one of whom received the highest Councilmanic vote cast, the other running at the head of the Republican Councilmanic candidates. Both of the league's recommendations for morning justice were elected by large majorities.

No attempt has been made to organize a distinctly municipal party. The idea of independent voting in municipal elections is just beginning to take hold of Buffalo, which is not yet sufficiently awakened. The presence of about 80,000 Poles and 20,000 Italians creates a serious problem, while the large German vote moves slowly to independent action.

The Municipal League is a permanent organization, carefully watches the work of the city and county governments, keeps up to date the records of all officials, and stands ready at any time to crystalize public sentiment and action against bad measures.

CINCINNATI**a CITIZENS' MUNICIPAL PARTY.****b HONEST ELECTION COMMITTEE.**

By MAX B. MAY, Cincinnati, Ohio.

The only city organization that has participated actively in municipal elections is the Citizens' Municipal Party, which was organized in the spring of 1903 in the municipal election of that year, nominating a municipal ticket. That party was supported by the Democratic organization, but the ticket was not successful. The Citizens' Municipal Party aims to be entirely independent and to bring about a total separation of national, state and municipal politics, but owing to the fact that in 1904 the spring elections which had heretofore occurred in Ohio were abolished and the elections this year were held on the same day that the state and county elections took place, the Citizens' Party as such was unable to nominate a ticket of its own, and therefore co-operated with a Democratic party by endorsing the municipal ticket, which was successful.

On November 7, 1905, there took place in Cincinnati one of the most important elections in her history. For many years past the city and county have been under the domination of the Republican machine. In the spring of 1903 there was nominated against the Republican city ticket the Citizens' municipal ticket, which was defeated by a majority of 15,000. In the county and city election in the fall of 1903, and in the Presidential election of 1904, the Republican majority in the county was so large that there seemed little hope of dislodging the machine. So confident were the Republican leaders that, during the legislative session of 1904, there was passed a bill abolishing spring city elections and providing that the next city election should take place in the fall of 1905. In Hamilton county there was nominated in the last week of September the usual city and county ticket. The leaders of the City Municipal Party, seeing that the only chance of success lay in the nomination of a strong Democratic ticket, wisely agreed to lend its support to this ticket. One of the strongest Democrats in the city, Judge Edward J. Dempsey, was nominated for Mayor. At the time of the nomination it seemed almost of an herculean task to overcome the Republican majority of 1904, which amounted to 42,000 in the county and some 36,000 in the city. However, all friends of good government united in this great task, and a victorious and aggressive campaign was begun. The Republican organization did nothing. The Times-Star and the Commercial-Tribune and the Republican German papers made a vigorous campaign on behalf of the ticket. The only support the Democratic ticket received in the way of active campaign work was from the Evening Post and the Citizens' Bulletin, a small weekly that has appeared regularly since the spring of 1903. The prospects did not seem the brightest, but when the citizens of Cincinnati, Sunday morning, October 21, read in the Cincinnati Enquirer (the only morning paper in Cincinnati that carried the speech in full) the great speech of

the Secretary of War, Honorable William H. Taft, that had been delivered the day before at Akron, Ohio, in which he stated that if he were in Cincinnati he would vote against the Cox municipal ticket, every one felt that the knell of the Cox reign had been sounded. From that time on the work in favor of the Democratic ticket became more aggressive, and it was in the air that Judge Dempsey and the entire Democratic ticket would win. At the election held in November last this prediction was verified, Judge Dempsey being elected by a majority of nearly 7000, and the county ticket, with the exception of Probate Judge, was elected by a majority of 6000; the Republican state ticket only carried Hamilton county by majorities of less than 500.

The defeat of the Cox machine is not entirely complete, because the City Council is still Republican, but there are not enough Republican votes to override the Mayor's veto.

Of course, the question now asked by every one is what will the Democrats do with their victory? This remains to be seen. The Legislature that meets in January next, though Republican by a small majority in the House, will be called upon to enact some very important remedial legislation, such as a new ballot law. An effort will be made to have the state adopt the pure Australian ballot. Should this be done, the friends of the ballot and of good government expect to repeal the Dana law, which prohibits the candidate's name from appearing more than once on the ballot. The Legislature will also be called upon to enact a civil service bill for the state, county and city, and the local branch of the National Civil Service Reform League is now preparing such a bill.

Two important constitutional amendments were adopted at the November election—the one exempting from taxation all bonds of the state of Ohio, bonds of any city, village, hamlet, county or township in the state, and bonds issued in behalf of the public schools of Ohio and the amount of instruction in connection therewith, and the other amendment provides that hereafter municipal elections shall be in odd years and county and state elections in even years. The adoption of this amendment will give the Ohio cities a separate municipal election.

The Citizens' Municipal Party, now that municipal elections are to be held in odd years by constitutional amendment, is endeavoring to organize on a permanent basis. It is securing pledges from citizens generally to become members of the party whose platform is total separation of state and national from city politics and the nomination of candidates solely upon merit. This party has an executive committee, and its leaders publish a weekly paper devoted to its cause called the "Citizens' Bulletin."

The maintenance of a distinctively municipal party is particularly difficult in this city, because the regular election machinery is in the hands of the central committee of the two dominant parties, parties which are national in scope, and under the existing election laws it is impossible for a purely municipal party to have its ticket placed upon the official ballot without presenting petitions properly signed as required by law. Then, again, the local press, with one exception, has given no support whatever to a dis-

tinctively municipal party, and heretofore the public at large has to some extent been so terrorized by the local machine that the majority of people were afraid to come out publicly in support of any movement opposed to the machine.

During the last campaign the Honest Election Committee was organized and did effective work. This committee has prepared important legislation which has already been introduced into the legislature, and when adopted will remove many of the difficulties which now stand in the way of independent movement. It is too early to state whether or not such movement will be successful. This legislation contemplates the Massachusetts ballot law, the direct primary law, a new registration law, a corrupt practice law and also the repeal of the Dana law, which prevents a candidate's name appearing more than once on the official ballot. Without some change in the election laws it will be extremely difficult for an independent municipal movement to succeed permanently.

PITTSBURGH

VOTERS' CIVIC LEAGUE.

By TENSARD DE WOLFE, Secretary Voters' Civic League, Pittsburgh, Pa.

On February 20th Pittsburgh elected as Mayor George W. Guthrie. He is a Democrat in national politics, but his election was made possible by the support of the independent element. This is a decisive victory for the independent voters of Pittsburgh. It also means the end of the present Republican machine in this city. A reorganization will be necessary, and it is believed that it will be headed by a better element than has heretofore taken part in political affairs.

The present reform victory, which is complete and substantial, comes after four years of constant political warfare. In 1902 the old Republican machine, which had ruled the city for twenty years, was overthrown. But the new machine was just as bad as the old, and its three years of administration were no improvement on the past. Mr. Guthrie was nominated for Mayor by the independent element, and through various political deals all the machine bosses—both new and old—were arrayed against him. Thus the independent victory was complete. Mr. Guthrie is a man of the highest character, wide experience, large ability.

Several independent municipal parties have been formed in Pittsburgh to meet the needs of the occasion. None of them have been permanent, although they may have lasted through one or more campaigns. They were formed along distinctively municipal lines. They have had the support of the best element in the city, and had much to do with the present independent victory.

The only permanent organization looking forward to a betterment of civic conditions is the Voters' Civic League. It takes no other part, however,

in active politics than investigating and reporting on candidates for city and county offices. Its work has been very effective, and the league in the future must be reckoned with by political parties.

Pittsburgh has suffered much from machine rule, but from the recent mayoralty election it is apparent that the honest voters of the community have discovered that they can elect their own officers. For the future it is believed that no machine will be able to entrench itself so substantially that it cannot be dislodged.

NEW ORLEANS

a CITIZENS' PROTECTIVE ASSOCIATION.

b CITIZENS' LEAGUE.

By JAMES J. McLOUGHLIN, New Orleans, La.

The reform element in municipal elections in New Orleans has been spasmodic in its manifestations. The city being overwhelmingly Democratic in its politics, of course all reform movements to be successful must be within the party, and whenever they have succeeded, they have worked in line with the principles of the national Democratic party.

In 1888 the first reform movement of any consequence began; it was organized under the name of the "Young Men's Democratic Association," was formed within the party, and was composed principally of citizens of means and influence. Their organization was throughout the entire city, and was in a sense semi-military in this, that armed guards were used at all polls where trouble was anticipated, to ensure an honest count of the votes. The election was won by the reformers, and their government controlled the city for four years. This "Young Men's Democratic Association" was purely a local affair, taking no part in state or national politics, and during the four years of its office-holding it lost most of its virility through inaction on the part of the better element of citizens of the city, and in 1892 one of the worst municipal tickets ever known was put before the people by the regular party and was elected.

This administration had not been in office very long before rumors of corruption were in the air. A franchise was granted to a railroad company to run its tracks through one of the most aristocratic residence avenues of the city. The franchise was of enormous value and covered some of the most valuable and influential sections of the city. The people were aroused at this grant on the part of the Council, and demands were made for the repeal of the ordinance. Immediately the "Citizens' Protective Association" took the matter up, and almost the entire Council was indicted, some of them being sent to the penitentiary. The Mayor was impeached before the court, but the court acquitted him on the ground that what he had done was done upon the advice of his counsel. The association, which was formed primarily

to punish these corrupt officials, grew in numbers, and was converted into the "Citizens' League," which led the next reform movement, in 1896.

It was carefully organized, with a central body and branches in each ward. Wealthy citizens contributed large sums of money, and as the months passed by it was seen that this association had gotten control of many of the wards of the city. The evidence of corruption brought out in the trials of the Councilmen and Mayor no doubt contributed largely to the success of the "Citizens' League."

In the election of 1896 the league elected twenty-seven of the thirty City Councilmen and all of its usual ticket.

Its plan of organization was, while nominally independent of both parties, still to retain the support of both. In this election of 1896 the "Citizens' League" carried the city of New Orleans for the Legislature, and its members in the Legislature secured a new city charter, which was a vast improvement upon the old one. As the state election was a close one, the Republican candidates coming within a few thousand votes (some say even closer than that) of being elected, the independents sought to elect a United States Senator, and came within one vote of electing their man to the United States Senate. This was their greatest achievement outside of the municipal government.

They controlled the city for four years, from 1896 to 1900, and it is agreed by all parties that the "Citizens' League" administration was the best ever known in the history of New Orleans. This administration carried into execution the sewerage and drainage scheme, by which the city of New Orleans will spend \$16,000,000 under a non-partisan board for sewerage and water.

An attempt was made to make this "Citizens' League" a permanent independent movement. The league was incorporated; but towards the end of its administration politics began to creep in, and the leader of the league, who successfully led it through a victorious campaign, deserted its colors, and, with a number of followers, went over to the regular Democratic party. This, and a widespread belief amongst a large number of people that the "Citizens' League" Mayor was in sympathy with certain corporations, contributed materially to the defeat of the league in 1900. Again, in 1904, an independent movement, including some of the old reform element, took up the municipal campaign, but the regular party was so well organized, and the people were so generally apathetic, that the result was a complete victory for the regulars. Since then nothing has been done to organize a distinct reform movement, although several suggestions have been made by various prominent citizens.

One peculiarity of the local situation which makes it difficult to organize a successful reform movement is our poll tax law. Under the laws of Louisiana no one can vote unless he has paid poll taxes for the two preceding years. In other words, in order to take part in the elections of 1906, he must have paid his poll taxes for 1904 and 1905 during those two years; he cannot pay them after the last day of the year for which they are levied.

Consequently, citizens have to prepare themselves two years in advance in order to be legal voters. Many of our most prominent citizens neglect to pay this poll tax and, consequently, are disqualified from voting. The president of the cotton exchange the other day was pronounced ineligible for election to a State Financial Board because he had not paid his poll tax for 1904. The result of this is that when some great popular movement arises, the citizens who compose it find themselves in a position where they cannot vote, because they neglected to pay their poll tax.

At present the great era of material prosperity which seems to prevail in New Orleans has taken possession of the better element of the city, and they take little part in politics, and the regular ward politicians have no opposition to their schemes of government.

Nevertheless, and beyond it all, I believe that our present municipal government is less corrupt than that of almost any of the large cities, and, as for actual bribery, I think that has passed away with the great victory of the "Citizens' League" when it drove out of office, and to the penitentiary, the corrupt officials of that day.

Our present City Council, while not to be compared with the "Citizens' League" government of eight years ago, is nevertheless a fairly good working one, and I think it is doing all it can, hampered as it is by its traditions and the manner in which it was chosen, to give the people of New Orleans a fairly good system of municipal rule.

MINNEAPOLIS

VOTERS' LEAGUE.

By S. P. JONES, Secretary Voters' League, Minneapolis, Minn.

Only one civic organization participated in the last municipal election in Minneapolis, that of 1904—the Minneapolis Voters' League.

This is an organization enlisted for practical and permanent effort for good municipal government in Minneapolis and Hennepin county. It works along exclusively non-partisan lines and confines its activities to the election of members of the City Council and the Board of County Commissioners, limiting its work chiefly to the investigation of the records and qualifications of candidates and publication of the same to the world through the local papers. The league co-operates with all existing party organizations, endorsing and supporting for nomination and election the men who, regardless of their party affiliations, are, in its judgment, best qualified for public service.

The Voters' League is a strongly centralized organization. Its immediate sponsors were sixty-five prominent business and professional men of Minneapolis. From this number an executive committee of seven was selected to shape the policy and to direct the details of the work. This committee is self-perpetuating and wholly independent of all direction from any source.

It reports only to the public. The original sixty-five members, known as the advisory committee, never meet as a committee. Individual members are called in consultation with the executive committee as their services are needed. There is an associate membership of about 500, made up of those who have by card expressed approval of the purposes of the organization.

The league is a permanent organization, keeping constant watch of municipal affairs within its jurisdiction, and at the conclusion of a campaign beginning immediate preparations for the next one. It rarely seeks to direct legislation in either city or county government.

No attempt has been made in Minneapolis to organize a distinctively municipal party. There has been very little sentiment for such a move, the prevailing opinion being that, with the large independent vote in this community, better results can be reached by the plan of the league to raise the standard of the respective party nominees by organizing disinterested citizens for the support of the best qualified men, irrespective of their party brand. We have found that a large share of the voters will choose rightly, if given proper direction from a reliable and disinterested source. The direct primary system in Minnesota gives such an organization the opportunity to take an active part also in the selection of the party nominees.

The local issues have not, up to date, been sufficiently clean cut, or the situation in the dominant parties so discouraging, as to necessitate the formation of a distinctively municipal party. The large independent vote tends to keep up the standard of candidates as well as of official performance.

KANSAS CITY

CIVIC LEAGUE.

By ALLAN O. HARRISON, Secretary Kansas City Civic League.

The Kansas City Civic League was organized in the fall of 1901, and incorporated under the laws of Missouri January 11, 1902. The purpose of the league is to "secure the nomination and election of aggressively honest and capable men to all city, township and county offices." The conditions which called for the civic league were: a generally demoralized city government, failure to enforce the law, graft, election frauds, incompetency of appointees, and indifference of good people to these things.

The plan of the league is to investigate the character and fitness of candidates for local offices and issue a report to the public, urging the election of those found worthy, and the defeat of those found unworthy, regardless of political party. After the election the league watches the conduct of those elected to office, and before the expiration of their term the league issues another report covering their official conduct. At the last two local elections it was noted that fully three-fourths of the League's recommendations had been followed by the voters.

The chief obstacles we have found in the way of electing high grade officials have been spoils, politics and election frauds. We have sought to remove the former by advocating civil service, and the latter by aiding in the prosecution of those found violating the election laws. Through the efforts of the league three men have recently been convicted and sentenced to two years each in the penitentiary for election frauds.

There is no distinctively municipal party in Kansas City. The two leading national parties are strongly entrenched in local elections, and there has been little or no effort to start a municipal party. The chief difficulties in the way of a purely municipal party are: First, the strong allegiance to one of the other of the national parties, which has amounted to a reverence with many Missouri voters in the past; and, second, the form of ballot used in Missouri. Each party has a separate ballot, and thousands of voters cast their ballots, not according to the merits of the candidates, but according to the caption of the ballot. This form of ballot is also conducive to vote buying. The Civic League is advocating the abolishment of the separate ballot or party column and the substitution of the single ballot, with the names of all candidates for each office under the designation of that office.

The Civic League is the only civic organization in the city that participates actively in municipal elections. During its early efforts the League was ignored by the politicians, but later they came to respect it, and candidates now respond promptly to the questions put to them by the league for information. The league is generally recognized as a power for good, and a large number of voters look forward regularly to the league's report as a guide for voting.

DENVER

LEAGUE FOR HONEST ELECTIONS.

By JAMES H. CAUSEY, Denver, Col.

The only civic organization which has taken an active part in our elections has been the League for Honest Elections.

This organization has not co-operated with any political party, but has devoted itself entirely to the work of purging our city of election frauds. The plan of organization was the simple one of forming fifteen men into a non-partisan body, with a president, vice-president, secretary and treasurer. It opened a permanent office, which it has maintained until this time, by having an office secretary and keeping the public in touch with its progress. It did not attempt to organize a municipal party for the reason that the field is pretty well covered by the two principal national parties. The flood of light which it threw on our election situation resulted in the arrest and conviction of many of the tricksters. A new registration law has been obtained from the Legislature which we think will be of great benefit hereafter.

The work of the League for Honest Elections is now being supplanted

by the State Voters' League along the lines of the Municipal Voters' League of Chicago, which will attempt to bring pressure to bear on both parties to nominate good men.

LOS ANGELES

MUNICIPAL LEAGUE.

By C. D. WILLARD, Secretary Municipal League, Los Angeles, Cal.

Los Angeles, California, is a thoroughly American city of from 175,000 to 200,000 population. It is normally Republican about two to one. There are 108 precincts in the city. At the last Presidential election Roosevelt carried 107 of these, his total majority being 13,000. One month later a municipal election was held, at which the Democratic nominee for street superintendent, endorsed by the Municipal League, carried 104 out of the 108 precincts. The Republican candidate secured the nomination fairly and was supported by the party organization. He and his friends put up a courageous fight, but went down to defeat with the overwhelming majority of 9,500 votes against him. This vote would seem to indicate that about half the electors of Los Angeles are prepared to vote independently of party nominations.

Up to 1896 there was no organized independent movement in Los Angeles, although a strong independent tendency showed at times in municipal and county affairs. The municipal election occurs every two years, just one month after the national or state and county elections (alternating). This arrangement is not much better than the simultaneous holding of the city and national elections. The partisan activity and enthusiasm stirred up by the larger issues is still in force when the municipal battle comes on, and nominations for city offices are often used as trading material in the county, state and national conventions.

In 1896 an organization known as the "League for Better City Government" came into existence, with an active membership of several hundred and an allied membership of about 6,000. The latter was obtained by taking signatures of citizens who would pledge themselves to the principle of non-partisan voting. All these signers were allowed to participate in a ballot through the mail. In this way a direct primary vote was secured and vacancies in the ticket (where there was no majority) were filled in by a convention of delegates chosen through this same postal primary. Several independent nominations were made, but for the most part the nominees of the regular organizations were endorsed. The result was the most satisfactory Council the city ever had, and the suppression of a systematic graft that had been carried on for years in the Board of Education. The league, however, went out of existence before the next municipal election was held.

The present Municipal League was established in the fall of 1901, with a resolve to "keep out of politics," and devote itself to civic improvement. It

passed the election of 1902, but by 1904 the bad condition of the city's streets brought the organization in direct conflict with the street superintendent, and a protest was entered against his renomination. The outcome of this contest is narrated above. At the same time the league advocated the election of a non-partisan school board, and secured the nomination of seven men of high standing for membership in that body. These were refused by the Republican convention, but accepted by the Democrats. They were elected by 3,000 majority against the Republican nominees. The remainder of the city ticket was left to itself. Most of the administrative offices were excellent, but the Council is very unsatisfactory.

Possibly by the time the next municipal election occurs the members of the league will be prepared to order that organization to take a hand in the contest. The league has procured an amendment to the city charter whereby the next election will be for a three years' term. This brings subsequent elections to non-political years, with an increase, it is believed, of the strength of the independent sentiment.

SEATTLE

MUNICIPAL OWNERSHIP LEAGUE.

By Prof. J. ALLEN SMITH, University of Washington.

There is at present an active sentiment here in favor of municipal reform. Seattle, like other rapidly growing cities, has learned something of the power of public utility corporations to defeat the will of the people. The subserviency of the City Council to the street railway and allied interests and its disposition to grant new privileges to these corporations without exercising such power as it now possesses to ensure adequate service, has awakened the people to the fact that something must be done to protect their interests. The opposition to these evils has within the last few weeks crystallized in a municipal ownership movement, or rather two movements—a municipal ownership league largely made up of business and professional men and a similar movement having its origin in and supported by the labor unions of the city. These two organizations have united in placing a municipal ownership ticket in the field, and are making an active campaign. It is probable that the Democrats will endorse the candidates of the municipal ownership party.

The platform adopted favors the direct nomination and the recall of public officials, and the prohibition of campaign contributions by public utility corporations. It opposes the grant of any franchise or other privilege except by direct vote of the people, and demands that no new franchise shall be granted to any street railway corporation, but that the city shall at once proceed to construct and operate a municipal system to supply the transportation facilities now badly needed in many parts of the city, which system shall be extended as the growth of the community may require.

The municipal ownership movement really began several years ago, when the city purchased the old water plant and built the present gravity system, which has proved to be a most satisfactory and profitable venture. Encouraged by the success of municipal ownership in this field, the people demanded and finally compelled the submission of a proposal to vote bonds for an electric light plant. The vote in favor of this was overwhelming, but, although the plant has been built, it has not yet become a serious competitor of the corporation which controls the distribution of light and power as well as the street railways. The extension of this municipal service to private consumers has been opposed and retarded in every way possible by the corporations, whose profits would be endangered by the active competition of a municipal plant.

The present municipal ownership movement here is in reality an effort to secure democracy. What the people want more than any thing else is a local government that will represent them rather than the public utility corporations.

Just what the local Republican machine will do remains to be seen. Its leaders have been consistent opponents of any thorough-going municipal ownership policy, but they now realize that some concessions must be made to public opinion before they can hope to win the support of a majority of the voters.